

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-28. (canceled)

29. (new) A method of delivering rented content data to a customer through the internet, the method comprising the steps of:

defining, by the customer, a rental period during which access to the content data is to be permitted;

providing from a dealer to the customer a secret key that is useable only during the rental period defined by the customer;

providing from the dealer to the customer the content data in encrypted form through the internet; and

at the customer, decrypting and reproducing the content data provided from the dealer using the secret key during the rental period.

30. (new) The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of charging the customer for access to the content data based on the rental period defined by the customer.

31. (new) The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of providing from the dealer to the customer

advertisement information in association with the provided content data.

32. (new) The method of claim 31, further comprising the step of selecting the advertisement information based on information about the customer.

33. (new) The method of claim 29, wherein the defining step includes the step of the customer selecting a time for delivery of the secret key to the customer.

34. (new) The method of claim 29, wherein the defining step includes the step of the customer selecting a time for delivery of the content data to the customer.

35. (new) A system for delivering rented content data to a customer through the internet, comprising:

a first server that receives a rental period during which access to the content data is to be permitted, the rental period being defined by the customer, and that provides to the customer a secret key that is useable only during the rental period defined by the customer;

a content store server communicating with the first server and that provides from the dealer to the customer the content data in encrypted form through the internet; and

a customer terminal communicating with the content store server and the first server and that decrypts and reproduces for the customer the content data provided from the dealer using the secret key during the rental period.

36. (new) The system of claim 35, wherein the first server charges the customer for access to the content data based on the rental period defined by the customer.

37. (new) The system of claim 35, wherein the first server also receives a time for delivery of the secret key to the customer that is defined by the customer.

38. (new) The system of claim 35, wherein the first server also receives a time for delivery of the content data to the customer that is defined by the customer.

39. (new) A program for carrying out a method of delivering rented content data to a customer through the internet, the program including instructions for carrying out the steps of:

defining, by the customer, a rental period during which access to the content data is to be permitted;

providing from a dealer to the customer a secret key that is useable only during the rental period defined by the customer;

providing from the dealer to the customer the content data in encrypted form through the internet; and

at the customer, decrypting and reproducing the content data provided from the dealer using the secret key during the rental period.

40. (new) The program of claim 39, further comprising the step of charging the customer for access to the content data based on the rental period defined by the customer.

41. (new) The program of claim 39, further comprising the step of providing from the dealer to the customer advertisement information in association with the provided content data.

42. (new) The program of claim 41, further comprising the step of selecting the advertisement information based on information about the customer.

43. (new) The program of claim 39, wherein the defining step includes the step of the customer selecting a time for delivery of the secret key to the customer.

44. (new) The program of claim 39, wherein the defining step includes the step of the customer selecting a time for delivery of the content data to the customer.